

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

PM-03 L-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 EUR-10 IO-03

DODE-00 PRS-01 DPW-01 PA-01 RSR-01 SSO-00 /071 W

----- 113650

O R 171130Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6112

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

USDEL JEC PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

CINCIAC

CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB IMMEDIATE

COMUSMACTHAI

USDAO/SAIGON/AOSOP-OR

USDEL FPJMT SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 14911

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)S

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, MILI, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE
EMBASSY AS OF 1800 AUGUST 17, AND COVERS THE PERIOD SINCE THE
LAST SITREP AUGUST 15.

SUMMARY

AT THE AUGUST 16 FPJMT MEETING THE PRG INTRODUCED A PROPOSAL ON REMAINS, CEMETERIES, AND MEMORIALS WHICH THE OTHER DELEGATIONS AGREED TO DISCUSS AT THE NEXT MEETING. IN ITS PRESENT FORM, THE PROPOSAL IS UNPROMISING. IN THE TPJMC, NEITHER SIDE HAS MOVED FROM ITS ESTABLISHED POSITIONS ON PRISONER EXCHANGES, DEPLOYMENTS, OR CEASEFIRE ENFORCEMENT. FOR THE SECOND TIME SINCE JUNE 13, HANOI HAS ACCUSED THE US OF OVERFLIGHTS OF THE DRV. INCREASED ENEMY ACTIVITY IS REPORTED IN SOUTHWESTERN THUA THIEN PROVINCE IN MR 1. SOUTHERN MR 2 REMAINED GENERALLY CALM, BUT THE WAR ABATED ONLY SLIGHTLY IN THE FOUR NORTHERN PROVINCES. MODERATE ACTIVITY IN MR 3 WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY A TWO-DAY FIGHT IN BEN LUC DISTRICT, LONG AN PROVINCE, DURING WHICH RF/PF UNITS INFLICTED SEVERE CASUALTIES ON AN UNIDENTIFIED (PROBABLY INFILTRATING) ENEMY UNIT, WITH NEGLIBLE LOSSES TO THEMSELVES. IN MR 4, MILITARY ACTIVITY REMAINS LOW IN CHUONG THIEN WHILE HEAVY PRESSURE CONTINUES ON OUTPOSTS IN DINH TUONG. TWO MORE RF BNS HAVE BEEN DISPATCHED TO CHUONG THIEN, WHERE THE GVN HAS ALSO EMBARKED ON AN AMBITIOUS OUTPOST CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM.

PART I FPJMT

AT THE AUGUST 16 FPJMT SESSION THERE WAS FURTHER INCONCLUSIVE DISCUSSION OF BUILDING CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALS. THE PRG DELEGATION INTRODUCED A PROPOSAL WHEREBY THE PARTIES WOULD ASSIST AND COOPERATE IN REGROUPING REMAINS IN PLACES CONVENIENT FOR EXHUMATION AND REPATRIATION OR CONSTRUCTION OF GRAVES, CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALS IF REQUESTED BY NEXT OF KIN OR BY PARTY TO WHICH THE DEAD PERSON BELONGS. DELEGATIONS AGREED TO STUDY THIS PRG PROPOSAL AND DISCUSS IT AT THE NEXT SESSION, BUT THE GVN REMAINS ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF CEMETERIES OR MEMORIALS WHICH IS NOT CONTEMPLATED BY THE C-F AGREEMENT.

PART II TPJMC

THERE HAS BEEN NO PROGRESS ON THE THREE MAIN ISSUES BEING CONSIDERED BY THE TPJMC DELEGATION CHIEFS. THE PRG DEL REFUSES TO PROVIDE THE SAFETY GUARANTEES THAT THE GVN DEL DEMANDS BEFORE CONFIDENTIAL

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RESUMING PRISONER EXCHANGES. ON DEPLOYMENT, THE GVN DEL CONTINUES TO INSIST ON DEPLOYMENT TO THE DESIGNATED REGIONAL SITES BEFORE CONSIDERING ANY "NEW" SITES. ON ENFORCING THE CEASE-FIRE, THE GVN DEL CONTINUES TO ARGUE THAT THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE DELEGATIONS AT LEAST TO THE REGIONAL LEVEL IS A NECESSARY PRE-CONDITION. THERE WAS AGREEMENT AT THE AUGUST 10 MEETING; BOTH SIDES AGREED TO REVERT TO THE PREVIOUS SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS WITH THE CHIEFS OF DELEGATION MEETING FROM 1000 TO 1300 ON TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS WITHOUT AFTERNOON SESSIONS.

PART III HANOI ACCUSES US OF OVERFLIGHTS

A DRV FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN ON AUGUST 16 CHARGED THAT THE US HAD VIOLATED DRV AIRSPACE ON AUGUST 14. THE SPOKESMAN ALLEGED TWO SEPARATE PENETRATIONS BY AN UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF

US AIRCRAFT AT 1045 AND 1100 HOURS ON THAT DATE (TIMES AS GIVEN; PRESUMABLY GMT PLUS 7). HE DESCRIBED SUCH ACTS AS A VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 2 OF THE JANUARY AGREEMENT AND ARTICLE 1 OF THE JUNE JOINT COMMUNIQUE AND CONSTITUTE "A BRAZEN PROVOCATION AGAINST THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE." (COMMENT: THIS IS THE SECOND ACCUSATION REGARDING OVERFLIGHTS HANOI HAS MADE SINCE JUNE 13.)

PART IV MR 1

1. THERE WERE 17 CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS, CONSISTING OF THREE GROUND ATTACKS, 10 ATTACKS BY FIRE (ABF) AND THREE HARASSMENTS. GVN CASUALTIES WERE NINE KIA, SIX MIA, AND 16 WIA: PRG/NVA CASUALTIES, SIX KIA.

2. ELEMENTS OF THE 54TH REGT IN SOUTHWESTERN NAM HOA DISTRICT OF THUA THIEN PROVINCE REPORTED AN INCREASE OF ENEMY ACTIVITY. BLOCKING POSITIONS OF THE 1ST BN/54TH REGT RECEIVED 261 ROUNDS OF MIXED MORTAR AND RECOILESS RIFLE FIRE THE EVENING OF 16 AUGUST. THE 54TH REGT CP RECEIVED FIVE ROUNDS OF 122MM ROCKET FIRE BETWEEN ON 16 AUGUST. A COMPANY OF THE 1ST DIV RECEIVED A GROUND PROBLE ON 16 AUGUST AND HELICOPTERS REPORTED GROUND FIRE AT TWO LOCATIONS. THE I CORPS TOC COMMANDER BELIEVES THAT THE ENEMY IS TESTING FRIENDLY FORCES IN THE PROVINCE AND ATTEMPTING TO REOPEN AN INFILTRATION ROUTE INTO THE AREA WEST OF PHU BAI. FRIENDLY ARTILLERY UNITS PROVIDED COUNTER-BATTERY AND SUPPORTING FIRE.

PART V MR 2
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1. THE WAR CONTINUED ONLY SLIGHTLY ABATED IN THE FOUR NORTHERN PROVINCES OF MR 2, WHILE THE SOUTHERN PROVINCES REMAINED GENERALLY CALM. A TOTAL OF 39 INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED: 14 IN KONTUM, 13 IN BINH DINH, SIX IN PHU YEN, THREE IN PLEIKU, AND THREE IN BINH THUAN. THE PREPONDERANCE OF INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED AS ENEMY ABF (27), AND WERE GENERALLY FOLLOWED BY RVNAF COUNTER-FIRE. THE REMAINDER INCLUDED SIX ENEMY GROUND ASSAULTS, FIVE MININGS AND ONE SUCCESSFUL PF SEARCH OPERATION. CASUALTY AGGREGATES: VC/NVA 56 KIA, TWO CAPTURED; RVNAF 23 KIA AND 45 WIA. THREE CIVILIANS WERE KILLED AND 15 WOUNDED AUGUST 15 WHEN THE VC MINED AND THEN ATTACKED A PASSENGER TRAIN TRAVELING FROM TUY HOA TO NHA TRANG. FOUR RF WERE ALSO WOUNDED IN THIS INCIDENT. TACTICAL AIR MISSIONS INCREASED MARKEDLY OVER THE LAST REPORTING PERIOD, AND 68 OF THE TOTAL OF 82 WERE FLOWN IN BINH DINH.

2. ON AUGUST 14 A BATTALION-PLUS OF THE ARVN 45TH REGT WAS EXPELLED FROM THE TRENCH-LINE JUST EAST OF TRUNG NGHIA, WHICH IT HAD OCCUPIED AUGUST 9-10. ONE BN OF THE 45TH AND ONE OR TWO CO'S OF A SECOND BN ARE STILL HOLDING THE POSITION AGAINST HEAVY ENEMY SHELLING.

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O R 171130Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6113

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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USDEL JEC PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

CINCPAC

CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB IMMEDIATE

COMUSMACHTAI

USDAO/SAIGON/AOSOP-OR

USDEL FPJMT SAIGON

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LIMDIS

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TAGS: PINT, PINS, MILI, VS

3. GVN REPORTING OF THE MAJOR ENGAGEMENT ON AUGUST 11 INVOLVING THE 22ND RANGER BN CONTINUES TO BE FUZZY, BUT THE ENEMY CASUALTIES REPORTEKUI IN THE AUGUST 13 SITREP AND THE CLAIMED RANGER VICTORY ARE BOTH HIGHLY SUSPECT. THE KONTUM POLITICAL OFFICE REPORTS CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT THE RANGER MOVEMENT NORTH TOWARD KONTUM CITY HAS BEEN REPULSED. THOUGH RANGERS UNITS HAVE NOT ENTIRELY LEFT KONTUM PROVINCE. DURING THE ABORTIVE ATTEMPT TO DIVERT THE ENEMY FROM HIS DEFENSE OF TRUNG NGHIA, THE RANGERS CAME IN CONTACT WITH AT LEAST TWO NEW NVA BNS APPARENTLY COMPOSED OF ELEMENTS OF OLD UNITS WHICH HAD BEEN

ACTIVE IN THE AREA.

4. PROV REP TUYEN DUC REPORTS THAT SOME 20 ARMED VC RECENTLY ENTERED PHU SON VILLAGE AND TOLD THE NATIVES THAT PHU SON WAS PRG TERRITORY AND THAT COMMUNIST ELECTIONS WOULD SOON BE HELD. THE VC REPORTEDLY PROMISED TO DISRUPT THE GVN AUGUST 26 SENATE ELECTION BY MEANS OF ARMED ATTACKS.

PART VI MR 3

1. MR 3 G2 REPORTS 38 MILITARY CLASHES DURING THE 48-HOUR PERIOD ENDING 0800 AUG 17, INCLUDING 12 GROUND ATTACKS, 14 ABF, AND AND TWO GROUND ABF. TOTAL GVN LOSSES WERE FOUR KILLED (ONE CIVILIAN), 16 WOUNDED (ONE CIVILIAN), AND ONE MIA; REPORTED COMMUNIST LOSSES WERE 69 KIA, EIGHT WIA/CIA, ONE RALLIER, AND A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF EQUIPMENT.

2. THE MOST INTENSE ACTION FOR THE 48-HOUR PERIOD TOOK PLACE NEAR BEN LUC, LONG AN PROVINCE ON AUG 16 AND 17, WITH HEAVIEST FIGHTING REPORTED ON THE 17TH. REPORTED LOSSES FOR GVN DURING THIS PERIOD WERE ONE KIA, SIX WIA, ONE MIA AND ONE M-16 LOST. COMMUNIST LOSSES REPORTED FOR THE SAME PERIOD WERE 60 KIA, FIVE WIA/CIA, 26 AK-47'S, FIVE M-16'S AND OTHER WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT MR 3 G-2 DOES NOT IDENTIFY COMMUNIST UNITS INVOLVED; FRIENDLY UNITS WERE ALL RF AND PF.

3. COMMUNIST LOUDSPEAKERS BLASTED 64TH RANGER BN, GUARDING RAILROAD REPAIRMEN EAST OF XUAN LOC IN LONG KHANH PROVINCE, FOR "CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS". ANOTHER LOUDSPEAKER AIMED AT TONG LE CHAN RANGER BASE CAMP BRANDED AIR RESUPPLY EFFORTS WITHOUT PRG AGREEMENT AS A "CEASE-FIRE VIOLATION" AGAINST WHICH PRG WOULD RETALIATE. THIS LOUDSPEAKER ALSO LABELED RECENT ONE-RANK PROMOTIONS FOR THE DEFENDERS AND THEIR REPLACEMENTS AS "BRIBERY".

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4. THREE-MAN JCRC TEAM, WITH ASSISTANCE FROM CONGEN DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, DISTRICT CHIEF, AND LOCAL PEOPLE, SUCCESSFULLY REMOVED REMAINS OF A WHITE AMERICAN MALE NEAR TRANG BANG DISTRICT TOWN, HAU NGHIA PROVINCE, MORNING AUG 16. THE CASE PRELIMINARILY APPEARS TO INVOLVE A US SERVICEMAN WHO DISAPPEARED WHILE ON GUARD DUTY IN THE LATE SIXTIES IN THAT AREA. VILLAGERS WERE MORE COOPERATIVE AFTER DISCOVERING THAT JCRC PERSONNEL ARE MORE INTERESTED IN RECOVERING REMAINS THAN IN IDENTIFYING THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CASUALTY (VC IN THIS CASE).

5. A LOCAL BANK OFFICIAL IN LONG AN PROVINCE TOLD LONG AN DEVELOPMENT OFFICER THAT HIS VILLAGE CADRE WERE REPORTING THAT COMMUNISTS IN HAU NGHIA-LONG AN AREA NEAR CAMBODIAN BORDER WERE SELLING RICE THROUGH FARMERS AT 9000\$ VN PER 100 KILO BAG, COMPARED WITH 17,000\$ VN IN TAN AN. THEY REPORTEDLY BOUGHT THE RICE SIX MONTHS AGO AND HELD IT WHILE PRICES IN GVN-CONTROLLED

AREAS ROSE, SO THEY ARE RESELLING AT NO LOSS. COMMUNISTS ARE ALSO PROMISING PEOPLE A THREE-YEAR TAX HOLIDAY IF THEY MOVE TO PRG-CONTROLLED AREAS. DEEPLY DISTURBED BY THE CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT AND BY BAD ECONOMIC SITUATION IN LONG AN, OFFICIALS WONDERED WHETHER VC HAD INFILTRATED HIGHEST LEVELS OF GVN TO CAUSE CORRUPTION, VAT, AND PRICE INCREASES WHICH ARE TURNING PEOPLE AGAINST THE GVN. HE PREDICTED COLLAPSE OF GVN WITHIN THREE MONTHS. CONGEN CITED THE CONVERSATION AS A REFLECTION OF CONCERN AMONG RESPONSIBLE FIGURES IN PROVINCES BY BAD ECONOMIC SITUATION.

PART VII MR 4

1. THERE WAS NO MR 4 BRIEFING AUG 17. FOR THE PERIOD ENDING THE MORNING OF AUG 16, MR 4 REPORTED 52 VC-INITIATED INCIDENTS INCLUDING TWO GROUND ATTACKS, 25 ABF AND FIVE HARASSMENTS. MR 4 REPORTED 27 OF ITS OWN TROOPS KILLED AND 104 WOUNDED, AND CLAIMED 38 ENEMY KIA, THREE CIA, AND 24 WEAPONS SEIZED.

2. ALTHOUGH FIGHTING IN CHUONG THIEN REMAINS LOW, HEAVY PRESSURE CONTINUES ON OUTPOSTS IN WESTERN CAI LAY AND SAM GIANG DISTRICTS IN DINH TUONG. FOUR OUTPOSTS ESPECIALLY HAVE BEEN UNDER ATTACK BY FIRE FOR THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, ONE OF WHICH WAS OVERRUN AUG 15 FOR THE SECOND TIME SINCE MID-JULY. THE SECTOR BRIEFING AUG 17 REPORTED EIGHT GVN TROOPS KILLED, 27 WOUNDED AND SEVEN MISSING DURING THE PREVIOUS 24 -HOUR PERIOD, AS AGAINST ONLY TWO VC KILLED
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AND ONE CAPTURED. TWO POSSIBLE REASONS FOR INCREASED DINH TUONG ACTIVITY ARE VC ATTEMPTS TO DIVERT 7TH DIVISION PRESSURE FROM THE TRI PHAP AREA AND TO DIVERT GVN ATTENTION FROM INFILTRATION OF MEN AND SUPPLIES. ACTIVITY IS ALSO UP IN NEIGHBORING MY AN DISTRICT OF KIEN PHONG, TO THE WEST.

3. THE GVN CONTINUES TO BEEF UP ITS ALREADY CONSIDERABLE TROOP STRENGTH IN CHUONG THIEN. MR 4 HAS DISPATCHED TWO MORE VINH LONG RF BNS TO CHUONG THIEN, BRINGING THE TOTAL OF OUT-OF-PROVINCE RF BNS THERE TO 14. IN ADDITION, MR 4 HAS AUTHORIZED 73 NEW OUTPOSTS FOR THE PROVINCE, ALL IN VC-INFLUENCED AREAS. 22 OF THESE HAVE ALREADY BEEN BUILT AND SEVEN ARE IN PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTION. (WE HAD REPORTED PREVIOUSLY THAT WE KNEW OF ONLY SEVEN NEW PLANNED OUTPOSTS).

4. FROM JUNE 15 TO AUG 16 VINH LONG REPORTS 254 CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS, 69 OF HIS SOLDIERS KILLED, 250 WOUNDED, 38 MISSING, AND 50 WEAPONS LOST. SECTOR CLAIMS 186 VC KILLED, THREE CAPTURED, AND 76 WEAPONS TAKEN.

5. THE PEOPLE IN ALMOST COMPLETELY PACIFIED SA DEC PROVINCE ARE MUCH MORE CONCERNED ABOUT ECONOMY THAN THE WAR. ALTHOUGH THE WAR IMPINGES RELATIVELY SELDOM ON PEOPLE'S LIVES, INFLATION IS A CONSTANT WORRY. FOOD PRICE INCREASES IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS ARE PARTICULARLY DISTRESSING. GENERALLY SPEAKING, PEOPLE BUY THE SAME AMOUNT OF FOOD BUT MORE AND MORE FOREGO THINGS LIKE TRIPS OR

NEW CLOTHES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 10 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SAIGON14911
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730869/abqcehsf.tel
Line Count: 329
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21-Aug-2001 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <19-Nov-2001 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SITREP
TAGS: PINT, PINS, MILI, VS
To: STATE INFO BANGKOK
BUDAPEST
JAKARTA
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CAN THO
CINCIAC
CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB
COMUSMACTHAI
USDAO SAIGON AOSOP-OR
FPJMT SAIGON

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005